

10 October 1976

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CIA-04 HARVEY, William K

The CIA's 'Load'

The Life and Hard Times Of America's James Bond, William King Harvey

By David C. Martin

Martin is a Washington reporter who covers the intelligence agencies.

THERE SHOULD have been more people there when they buried Bill Harvey last June. In a way, when the most controversial clandestine operator in CIA history died of a heart attack at 60, it was the end of an era.

Twelve months before his death, William King Harvey had been a key witness in the Senate intelligence committee's investigation of the CIA's futile efforts to assassinate Fidel Castro. Harvey had not only been directly involved; he perhaps held the answer to whether President Kennedy had ordered Castro's death.

Maj. Gen. Edward Lansdale, whose own covert exploits inspired no less a novelist than Graham Greene, had told the committee of a meeting between Harvey and the President. Some time in late 1961 or early 1962, Lansdale recalled, the President had remarked to him that he was the American James Bond. Lansdale, with all due modesty, demurred, suggesting that the real 007 was to be found at the CIA in the person of Bill Harvey. Fan of Ian Fleming that he was, the President asked to

meet Harvey and, before erator was sitting with L.

As they waited to be Harvey and said, "You you?" Of course he was, a revolver from his pants how the Secret Service v to keep the damn thing the agents that the gent firearm. Harvey turned c to enter the Oval Office something, he whipped c holster snapped to his h handed it to what must agents.

Harvey denied under firearms that day to the may not be Lansdale's in ingredient in the storie household word in cloak two decades before it fin

President Kennedy m at the sight of his Ame eyed, bullet-headed, per strut that was part wad

deep, booming voice and absolute self-assurance must have restored the President's faith in 007 somewhat, but Ian Fleming would never read the same again. They had a brief but pleasant chat, Harvey testified, with absolutely no mention of assassination.

Triumphs and Troubles

FOR ONE year after his meeting with the President, Harvey operated for the only time in his career at the highest levels of government. As head of the agency's Task Force W, he directed intelligence gathering missions, propaganda activities, paramilitary operations and sabotage raids against Cuba as part of a carefully orchestrated administration effort to overthrow Castro.

It was known as Operation Mongoose, a plan drafted by Lansdale and approved by the President in writing. Harvey took his orders from the Special Group (Augmented) which was chaired by Gen. Maxwell Taylor and "augmented" by Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy.

It would prove Harvey's undoing, for he was strictly an operator, ill-suited to the corridors of power. As John McCone, who headed the CIA at the time, would later say, "When you take a plant supervisor and make him president of the company, it doesn't always work out."

But the Kennedy administration could not abide the bearded spectre of communism 90 miles off its shores. "We were hysterical about Castro," Robert McNamara would tell the intelligence committee. Sabotage became policy, and covert operators like Harvey and Lansdale became in effect special assistants to the President's brother. As one Senate investigator put it, Harvey's elevation was "archetypal of the overemphasis on covert

CASTRO, Fidel

CIA 855C

CIA 4-01 ASSASSINATION

LANSDALE, Edward

KENNEDY, John F.

CIA 4W Germany: Berlin

CIA 7-02 FBI

~~ORG. MAFLA~~

CIA 1-04 MAHEU, Robert

CIA 4-01 Operation Mongoose

CIA 1-04 FITZGERALD, Desmond

CIA 1-01 Helms, Richard

P. Whitten, Les

Roselli, John

(originator Martin)